

A Messianic Family Haggadah

Birkat HaNer

Lighting of the Candles

Traditionally, Passover is celebrated at home with family after all leaven has been removed from the household. Once the house and the participants are ceremonially clean, the Passover Seder can begin. The woman of the house says a blessing and lights the Passover candles. It is appropriate that the woman brings light into the home, because it was through the woman that the light of the world, Messiah Jesus, came into the world (Gen. 3:15; Luke 2:7).

The woman of the house recites the following Hebrew prayer:

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haOlam, asher kidshanu bemitsvotav vetsivanu lehadlik ner shel yom tov.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with Thy commandments and commanded us to kindle the festival lights.

The Four Cups of the Fruit of the Vine

The Passover Seder is structured around four cups of the fruit of the vine, which serve as the foundation for the experience. Each cup is named after one of the four specific promises that God made to Israel in Exodus 6:6–7. Each cup is thematically connected to a different stage in the progression of the Seder.

1. The Cup of Sanctification
2. The Cup of Plagues
3. The Cup of Redemption
4. The Cup of Praise

Kiddush

First Cup: The Cup of Sanctification

The Seder begins with a blessing recited over the first cup, the Cup of Sanctification (also called the Cup of Blessing). This first cup is meant to sanctify—to set apart—the rest of the evening as a holy occasion. We fill the cup until it overflows, as in Jewish tradition a full cup is a symbol of joy. Passover moves us to rejoice and celebrate God’s goodness to His people. As a symbol of freedom, we drink comfortably leaning to the left.

All fill the cup. The leader recites the blessing and all drink leaning to the left:

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haOlam, boray pri hagahfen.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Urchatz

Washing of the Hands (John 13:1–11)

This first washing of the hands is a symbolic gesture of personal sanctification as we enter into the holy celebration of the Passover. Traditionally, two children carry a pitcher, a basin, and a towel and go around the table pouring a little water on the guests' hands, starting with the leader of the Seder.

Karpas

Dipping of the Parsley (Exodus 12:21–22)

The parsley symbolizes the hyssop used to place the blood of the Passover lamb upon the doorposts and lintels of the homes of the children of Israel during the tenth and most terrible plague that the Lord visited upon Egypt—the slaying of the firstborn. The salt water represents the tears of the children of Israel and the Red Sea. We are therefore reminded of the tears shed by those not yet redeemed and still in slavery. This is a good time to mention those around the world who are hurting and enslaved.

All dip a sprig of parsley in the salted water, the leader recites the blessing, all eat the parsley:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech haOlam, bohray pri haadamah.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the earth.

Yachatz

Breaking of the Middle Matzah

One of the central elements of the Passover is matzah (unleavened bread). For the Passover Seder, three separate sheets of matzah are inserted into a bag with three compartments, known as the matzah tash.

In Jewish tradition, this three-in-one bag has many interpretations. It is said to represent the three Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; or the three kinds of people of Israel: the priests, the Levites, and the masses. Believers in Yeshua suggest that this could be a representation of the triune nature of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The leader takes the middle matzah, breaks it in two and puts one half back in the middle of the matzah tash. He then wraps the other half, now known as the afikoman, in a white napkin and hides it. This hidden matzah will reappear at the conclusion of the Passover meal.

Maggid

The Story of the Passover (Read Exodus 12:1–15)

It is tradition to read the story of the Passover every year at the Seder, to ensure that every generation keeps the memory of Israel's deliverance from slavery alive.

Ma-Nishtanah

The Four Questions

As the retelling of the Exodus story begins, the youngest child (who can read!) asks the Four Questions to the leader of the Seder. You might choose to have all the children read together, have one child ask each question, or ask one child to read them all.

Mah nish-ta-nah ha-lai-lah ha-zeh mi-kohl ha-lay-lot?

In English:

“Why is this night so different from all other nights?”

1. “On all other nights we eat bread with leaven. On this night why do we eat only matzah?”

2. “On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables; on this night why do we eat only bitter herbs?”

3. “On all other nights we never think of dipping herbs in water or in anything else; why on this night do we dip the parsley in salt water?”

4. “On all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining; on this night why do we eat only reclining?”

The leader of the Seder responds to the questions with the traditional answer: We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and God brought us out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. And if God had not brought our ancestors out of Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would still be subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if we were all old and wise and learned in Torah, we would still be commanded to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

The Ten Plagues

Each Passover cup is a symbolic full cup of joy except for the second cup—the Cup of Plagues—because God teaches us never to rejoice over the fate of our enemies. For this reason, the filling of the second cup must be reduced.

The second cup is filled. The leader of the Seder leads the group in a recitation of the ten plagues that the Lord poured out upon the Egyptians.

To reduce the second cup, each participant dips their little finger into the cup, removing one drop and placing it onto a plate in front of them, once for each plague. The names of the plagues are recited in unison as the drops are removed.

Blood! Frogs! Gnats! Flies! Pestilence! Boils! Hail! Locusts! Darkness! Slaying of the Firstborn!

“Dayenu,” It Would Have Been Enough

Just as we do not rejoice over the fate of our enemies, we also recognize the magnitude of God’s salvation and His gracious actions toward us. With a grateful heart and a healthy fear of the Lord, we sing “Dayenu” (“it would have satisfied us”) together, remembering the many great acts that God has done on behalf of His people.

Ilu hotzi, hotzianu, hotzianu miMitzrayim, hotzianu miMitzrayim, dayenu!

Dai-dai-yenu, dai-dai-yenu, dai-dai-yenu, dayenu, dayenu!

Had God done nothing but save us from the land of Egypt, for that alone we would have been

satisfied!

Ilu natan natan lanu, natan lanu et haTorah, natan lanu et haTorah, dayenu!

Dai-dai-yenu, dai-dai-yenu, dai-dai-yenu, dayenu, dayenu!

Had God given us nothing more than the Torah, for that alone we would have been satisfied!

Ilu natan natan lanu, natan lanu et Yeshua, natan lanu et Yeshua, dayenu!

Dai-dai-yenu, dai-dai-yenu, dai-dai-yenu, dayenu, dayenu!

Had God given us nothing more than Yeshua, for that alone we would have been satisfied (yet He continues to give us so much more)!

Makkot

Second Cup: The Cup of Plagues

The reduced second cup, the Cup of Plagues (also called the Cup of Judgment), is raised and all recite the following:

Truly, we can say Hallelujah for the great redemption that God has wrought on our behalf, redemption at a terrible price: in Egypt, the death of the first born; for us, redemption from sin, the death of God’s Son. “For God so

loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

This is also a good time to sing a chorus or two about God’s love and Yeshua’s sacrifice for our sins.

The leader recites the blessing, all drink leaning to the left:

Baruch Atah Adonai Elo-hei nu Me-lech ha-Olam, boh-ray pri ha-gah-fen. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Zeroah or Pesach

The Lamb Shankbone

The lamb shankbone is a symbol of the Temple sacrifice. It sits on the Passover plate as a reminder of the first Passover lamb sacrificed for the children of Israel, whose blood was applied to the lintel and doorposts of their homes. We raise the shankbone of the lamb and again remind ourselves of the lamb slain on behalf of the firstborn males among the Jewish people. We also take this moment to reflect upon the death of Jesus for our sins, as He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). We explain to our children the nature of redemption and the need for the shedding of blood for all of us to experience forgiveness of sin (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22).

It might be appropriate to read all or part of Isaiah 52:13–53:12 at this time as a way to remember the work of Jesus the Messiah on our behalf.

Rachtzah

Second Washing of the Hands

The second symbolic washing of the hands reinforces personal sanctification as we continue the celebration of the Passover. Yeshua appears to have taken Rachtzah one step further by washing the feet of His disciples, providing us with an unparalleled lesson in servanthood and humility (John 13:2–17). This second washing is followed by a blessing:

Ba-ruch Atah Adonai Elo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-Olam, ash-er kid-sha-nu b’mits-vo-tav v’tsi-va-nu al ne-tee-lat ya-dayim.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of hands.

Motzi, Matzot

As the first portion of the Seder draws to a close, the family partakes of several of the remaining elements on the Seder plate. These elements are intended to involve our senses in the remembrance of the Passover story. Each one helps us connect with a different step in the process of Israel's deliverance from slavery. For believers in Yeshua, these elements remind us of the process of deliverance from our slavery to sin to our freedom in Messiah.

The matzah tash is raised and the following blessing is recited.

Ba-ruch Atah Adonai Elo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-Olam, Ha-mo-tzi le-chem min hah-ah-retz.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth. Each person now breaks off a small piece of matzah and all recite the following blessing:

Ba-ruch Atah Adonai Elo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-Olam, ash-er kid-sha-nu b'mits-vo-tav v'tsi-va-nu al a-chi-lat ma-tzah.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the eating of unleavened bread.

All eat together of the matzah.

Maror

Eating of the Bitter Herbs

The maror (bitter herbs) reminds us of the bitterness of Israel's slavery in Egypt and the bitterness of humankind's slavery to sin. It is tradition to dip one's matzah and take a heaping portion of the bitter herb, enough to make one shed a tear. Each person breaks an olive-sized piece of matzah and dips it in the bitter herbs. The following blessing is recited:

Ba-ruch Atah Adonai Elo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-Olam, ash-er kid-sha-nu b'mits-vo-tav v'tsi-va-nu al a-chi-lat mah-ror.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the eating of the bitter herbs.

All eat together of the maror.

Korech

Eating of the Bitter Herbs and Charoset

The charoset (sweet mixture) symbolizes the mortar the children of Israel used to make the bricks as they toiled under Pharaoh's harsh taskmasters. It is eaten with matzah.

In order to settle a controversy about how the Passover is to be eaten, Rabbi Hillel, a famous sage, began the tradition of the "Hillel sandwich," which is made by eating the maror and the charoset together between two pieces of matzah. It is also said that this combination of bitter and sweet reminds us that God's promise can bring joy in the midst of sorrow.

Each person takes two small pieces of matzah and places some charoset and maror in the middle. All eat together.

Beitzah

The Roasted Egg

The roasted egg on the Seder plate brings to mind the roasted daily Temple sacrifice that no longer can be offered because the Temple no longer stands. In the very midst of the Passover Seder, Jewish people are reminded that there is no sacrifice to bring righteousness before God. We take a piece of the egg and dip it in salt water, a symbol of tears, and all eat.

This concludes the first portion of the seder

Shulchan Orech

The Set Table

The Passover meal can now be served. Eat, tell stories, and enjoy! Be sure to use the [recipes](#) included in this book (see chapter 6, "Passover Foods and Recipes," by Mitch Forman).

Tzafun

Finding and Eating the Afikoman

After the meal is finished, the leader of the Seder sends the children to find the afikoman, which is the middle piece of matzah that was broken, wrapped in a napkin and hidden before the meal. The child who finds it brings it to the leader of the Seder, who redeems the afikoman with a symbolic reward, usually some money or chocolate.

According to tradition, the leader of the Seder then unwraps the afikoman, blesses it, and breaks it up into small olive-sized pieces. He then distributes a small piece to everyone seated around the table and all eat the afikoman together.

For believers in Yeshua, there is great significance in this tradition. We believe that it was at this point in the Passover Seder when Yeshua seized the moment to reveal to His disciples His identity and the pending suffering and death that He would soon endure. The Gospel of Luke records Messiah's words on this occasion: "And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me'" (Luke 22:19).

We believe that Yeshua Himself was the middle piece of matzah, the piece representing the priest or mediator between God and the people. He was broken in death, wrapped for burial, and resurrected from the dead. The matzah represents His sin-free (unleavened) sacrifice for our redemption from sin and death.

When the leader of the Seder unwraps the afikoman and distributes a piece to everyone seated at the table, it reminds us that Yeshua the Messiah distributed His life to all who believe.

We might also reflect upon the appearance of traditional matzah, which is made both striped and pierced, as His body was striped and pierced (Isa. 53:5). This middle piece of matzah, the afikoman, is the "Bread of Life" (John 6:35) we share in the Lord's Supper or Communion as believers.

Having explained this to the participants, now the leader breaks the afikoman into olive-sized pieces and gives one to each person to hold briefly as together they reflect on the sacrifice that Yeshua endured in His body. Then all partake in unison after the following prayer is said:

Ba-ruch Atah Adonai Elo-hei-nu Me-lech Ha-Olam, Ha-mo-tzi le-chem min ha-ah-retz.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

HaGeulah

Third Cup: The Cup of Redemption

The Cup of Redemption is based on God's promise in Exodus 6:6, "I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments." It is a reminder of the lamb's blood, the price paid for Israel's promised redemption. In the same way, Yeshua likely took this cup and spoke the words in Luke 22:20, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood." In so doing, He

spoke of a greater redemption than the Israelites experienced in Egypt. Yeshua had in mind the redemption and deliverance of humankind, forgiven of sin through the shed blood of the Lamb of God. Yeshua is quoting from the great New Covenant prophecy given by the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 31:31–34. The cup is filled and the following blessing is recited:

Baruch Atah Adonai Elo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-Olam, boh-ray pri ha-gah-fen. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

All drink leaning to the left.

Eliyahu

Elijah's Cup (Luke 1:17; Malachi 4:5–6)

The Bible tells us in Malachi 4:5 that Elijah will appear to herald the coming of the Messianic King:

Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

It is tradition to have an additional place setting, complete with a cup of the fruit of the vine, for Elijah at Passover. The leader of the Seder usually sends a child to the front door to look outside and see if Elijah is coming. Thus far, he has never attended a Seder!

But has he? The Bible tells us in Luke 1:17, speaking of John the Baptist, "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah." John did indeed come to fulfill Elijah's role as herald to announce the first coming of the Messiah, fulfilled in the coming of Yeshua.

Hallel

Fourth Cup: The Cup of Praise

What is the proper response to redemption? Joy, of course! We rejoice, knowing that the Jewish people were delivered from Egyptian bondage and that both Jewish and Gentile followers of the Messiah were redeemed from the bondage of sin and death. The fourth and final cup of the Passover Seder is the Cup of Praise—a cup of rejoicing, joy, and consummation. It is the first taste of freedom beyond redemption. It is a reminder of Israel's promised future beyond slavery in Egypt—dwelling instead in freedom in the Promised Land. In many ways, this cup also foreshadows the glorious future for Israel and the world to come in the age of the Messianic kingdom.

The cup is filled, all lift it and the following blessing is recited:

**Baruch Atah Adonai Elo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-Olam, boh-ray pri ha-gah-fen.
Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit
of the vine.**

All drink leaning to the left.

Hallel

Psalms (Psalms 113–118)

In the spirit of joy and celebration, we rejoice together for all that God has done for us! He has set us apart to be His people, He has brought us out of slavery, He has redeemed us, and He has brought us to Himself. For all of this we praise Him! As the Seder comes to a close we go out singing the Hallel Psalms (Pss. 113–18). It is incredible to realize that in Yeshua's last moments of freedom and fellowship on earth, He and His disciples also sang as they finished their Seder and went out to the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26).

This is a wonderful opportunity to read and reflect on these psalms together, and consider the strong Messianic undertones of each. There are traditional tunes for these songs, but we also encourage you to find some traditional hymns or contemporary worship songs that are based on these Psalms.

Next Year in Jerusalem!

It is tradition to conclude the Seder with a joyous proclamation of hope and faith by reciting in unison:

**L'Shana HaBa'ah B'Yerushalayim!
"Next Year in Jerusalem!"**

This has great meaning to followers of Jesus the Messiah because we expect Him to return! We do not know the day of His second coming, but we wait in hope knowing that as surely as the Messiah came once to redeem us from sin, so He will come again as judge to establish His kingdom. As God promises through the prophet Isaiah,

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. (Isa. 9:6–7)

And as the Apostle Paul writes, in light of our expectation of Messiah's return,

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:58)

Happy Passover!